

# Sports

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VERNON DAILY NEWS, THURSDAY, NOV. 7, 1974

8

## Booth's injury causes concern

With three important games coming up this weekend an injury in practice Wednesday has caused Vernon Vikings' coach Joe Tennant a great deal of concern.

Winger Darrell Booth, the club's second highest scorer, suffered an eye injury in a fluke accident.

He went to a doctor immediately and must again see him Friday to determine when he will be able to play again.

With a home-and-home series against Penticton, Friday and Saturday, and the red hot Merritt Centennials in town Sunday, Vikings will not only be battling for second place, but they will be fighting to stay out of the league basement.

Vernon and Penticton have 15 points, seven points back of the league-leading Kelowna Buckaroos, but only four ahead of the cellar-dwelling Centennials.

Vikings assigned two players to their farm club in Grand Forks today.

Sent down were goalie Keith Ferner and forward Larry Thompson.

Grand Forks desperately needed a goalie and some scoring punch. In nine games this season, Vikings' affiliate has managed only one win.

Thompson joined the Vikings this week and was sent down to play himself into shape.

In the only B.C. Junior Hockey League game Wednesday, Langley Lords fired 71 shots on goal, and edged Bellingham Blazers 4-3 in overtime.



DARRELL BOOTH  
... eye injury

## Kami 'spiel deadline near

Entries close Nov. 18 for the Kami Business Girls Curling Bonspiel, to be held at the Kamloops Curling Club.

The 'spiel runs from Nov. 22 to 24.

Cost is \$44 per rink. Entries should be sent to Carol Hoffman, 150 Highland Rd., Kamloops.



# Wanted: hockey fans



Vernon is in danger of losing its B.C. Junior Hockey League franchise.

Unless crowds improve considerably between now and the end of the season, owners of the Vernon Vikings will be forced to take a long, hard, look at the operation of their club.

To date this year, the owners have lost a bundle. They hired a full time coach this season, opened a downtown office, and recruited players from throughout B.C. and Alberta. And still the crowds are terrible.

To make the team a break-even proposition, Vikings need about 1,100 fans per game. So far, in eight home games, the average paid attendance has been below 600. The team also lost a considerable amount of money during the 1973-74 season. With expenses up, and crowds down, they stand to lose more this year.

## FOUR CHOICES

If attendance figures do not improve, the owners will have four alternatives. The first, and most unlikely, will be to continue operating the club at a loss.

The second choice would be to fold the team. But, that is unlikely because the owners have too much money invested.

Third alternative is selling the team to out-of-town interests, but that too is unlikely because it is doubtful if another group would pay enough to recover the present owners' investment.

The final, and most logical choice, would be to move the team to another city. There are probably several cities which would welcome a junior A team with open arms. Perhaps a Kootenay centre.

If Vernon does lose its junior A franchise, it will be long time before the city gets it back.

## THE REASONS

There could be several reasons why the club is drawing poorly, but, not claiming to be an authority on human nature, it is hard to say what is the main reason.

One which immediately comes to mind is the lack of publicity. The team has done some promotion work but not near as much as some of the league's other teams.

Another reason could be that the Vikings, this season, have an extremely young roster. Possibly fans would rather see older, and more experienced players.

One of the reasons the owners feel the crowds are down is, the rundown shape that the civic arena is in.

On that point, I have to agree with the owners. The arena is one of the oldest, and most poorly kept facilities of its type in the province.

Exactly how many people who don't go to Vikings' games because of the arena, will never be known.

Bad arena, young team, and all, fans had better start supporting the Vikings soon. Or else, there may not be a next season.